Ashley Heuston

Pd. 3

**“The only way to get rid of my fears is to make films about them”**

These are the words of the one and only great “master of suspense,” the “Supreme technician of the American cinema,” Alfred Hitchcock (Harmon, 1993). Alfred Hitchcock is interesting by the way he thought and how his films turned out. He lived in England until he became an America citizen in 1956. During the decade of 1955-1965, Hitchcock hosted and produced the television show, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents (Wikimedia Foundation, 2009).* Also during that decade, Hitchcock’s three most famous movies were produced. Those movies were *Vertigo, Psycho,* and *The Birds.*

Alfred Joseph Hitchcock was born in the suburb Leytonstone, London on August 13, 1899. Hitchcock was the second son and the youngest of three children. He was named after his uncle. He was mostly Roman Catholic. He went to the Jesuit School St. Ignatius College in Enfield, London. He would often describe his childhood as being very lonely and sheltered. Most of his movies were from his own fears. As a child, Alfred’s father sent him to the local police station with a note asking the officers to lock him away for ten minutes as punishment for behaving badly. His mother would also use similar punishments. By being treated harshly or wrongfully accused, Alfred would frequently reflect those feelings in his films. For example, his mother would make him stand at the end of her bed for hours if he behaved badly. These experiences would later be portrayed in the movie *Psycho*. (Wikimedia Foundation, 2009) He married Alma Reville, with whom who he worked with on many of his movies. They had a daughter, Patricia, who appeared in many of his movies. Before his death, Queen Elizabeth II knighted Alfred Hitchcock. (Jones, 2000)

Alfred Hitchcock was one of the first prominent motion picture producers to fully envision just how popular the medium of television would become. From 1955 until 1965, Alfred Hitchcock hosted and presented *Alfred Presents.* His TV series made him a celebrity himself. “His irony-tinged voice and signature droll delivery, gallows humor, iconic image and mannerisms became instantly recognizable and were often the subject of parody,” said an on looker. Before the stories in his program, he would always include some kind of wry humor, such as the description of a recent multi-person execution hampered by having only one electric chair, while the two were now shown with a sign “Two chairs-no waiting!” He also directed a few of the episodes. When they filmed *Psycho*, he insisted on using his TV production crew rather than a movie production crew. By doing that, he upset many of the movie production companies. (Wikimedia Foundation, 2009)

“Once the screenplay is finished, I’d just as soon not make the film at all… I have a strongly visual mind. I visualize a picture right down to the final cuts. I write all this out in the greatest detail in the script, and then I don’t look at the script while I’m shooting. I know it off by heart, just as an orchestra conductor needs not look at the score… When you finish the script, the film is perfect. But in shooting it you lose perhaps 40 percent of your original conception.”

Although he might have felt he lost 40% of his conception, he still made top-of-the-chart movies. The three most recognizable films made by Alfred Hitchcock are *Vertigo, Psycho, and The Birds.* *Vertigo*, 1958, starred the Indiana, PA, native Jimmy Stewart. A former police investigator (Stewart) suffered from acrophobia and developed an obsession with the woman he was shadowing. His obsession lead to tragedy, and this time Hitchcock didn’t opt for a happy ending. Hitchcock won a Silver Seashell for this movie at the San Sebastián International Film Festival. *Psycho*, 1960, was considered to be one of Hitchcock’s most famous films. Hallmarks made by Hitchcock were the unprecedented violence of the shower scene, the early demise of heroine, and the innocent lives extinguished by a disturbed murderer. *The Birds*, 1993, was inspired by a short story by Daphne Du Maurier and an actual news story about a mysterious infestation of birds in California. *The Birds* was Hitchcock’s 49th film. The scenes of the birds attacking included hundreds of shots mixing real and animated sequences. The cause of the birds’ attacks is still left unanswered. Hitchcock one said, “perhaps highlighting the mystery of forces unknown.”Hitchcock also stated, “The length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder.” His entire movie list fits into that category. (Wikimedia Foundation, 2009)

Alfred Hitchcock is one of the best directors in the entire movie business, in the past, present, and the future. People have tried to re-make his movies, and they have successfully failed at attempting it. No one should try to attempt an Alfred Hitchcock movie, for he is the greatest, and he can not be topped on his own movies. I love all kinds of horror and psychological movies. A good majority of Hitchcock’s movies are those genres of movies.